

# PACIFIC HORIZON

*Connecting Pacific Islander Communities in Utah*

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Director  
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Pacific Islander Affairs

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## Message from the Director

The summer is always the busiest time for Pacific Islanders! The weather is warm and we are in our element. It is a time for celebrations of educational achievements from public schools and institutions of higher learning. It is a time when extended families get together for reunions, often requiring travel.

As we get together, it is also an ideal opportunity to converse and share our successes and our accomplishments as well as the lingering challenges that never seem to leave us as a people, as we continue to try and acculturate in this society. We have had many successes and we need to congratulate ourselves, but there were also a lot of shortfalls that still demands attention. Some of our children have graduated from high school, and we are now looking ahead to the next step. We now need to start preparing for college studies. We cannot wait until September to do things when school starts.

Some of our children were not as fortunate because they missed out in the high school graduations. I attended a high school graduation this week and took the time to go through the list of graduates and counted 32 Pacific Islanders. At work the next day, I checked the enrolment to find that 12 Pacific Islanders were missing from the graduating program. These 12 students may only need a few credits for their diploma, and perhaps the priority during this summer is to complete the remaining requirements.

We need to take the time during this summer to sit down with our kids and truly evaluate their performance in school. In our reunions, celebrations, festivals and summer get together, let us network and see where we can help each other. We need to share candidly as parents how we arrived in the achievements of our children in the past school year, because we need to make those successes contagious. It is great to celebrate during summer and enjoy ourselves but we must always be mindful of the realities that we face.

Governor Olene Walker has launched a literacy campaign for this summer and the program has been distributed to all the students through the schools. There is a calendar that gives kids daily learning assignments that will definitely enrich them and you also as you help them. The readers for children are on sale over the summer at the bookstores in an attempt to make books more available. The Challenge is to Read Aloud with your Kids for Twenty Minutes Daily! The latest test scores in one school district shows that 32% of Pacific Islanders are not proficient in Reading. This shows very clearly that our kids need the help in literacy over the summer!

Enjoy the summer and share some real quality times with your children!

## 2004 All State First Teams

**Golf:** Tony Finau, West; **Volleyball:** Faalua Lobendahn, Provo; Ilima Sam Fong, Hurricane; **Girls Basketball:** Marsha Heimuli, Orem; Mona Tu`itupou, East; **Boys Basketball:** Tai Wesley- Mr. Basketball, Provo; Marques Whippy, Woods Cross; **Football:** Ben Ama, Hunter; Matt Asiata, Hunter; Daryl Brown, Cyprus; Ray Feinga - Mr. Football, Hunter; Inoke Hafoka, East; Malele Hiva, East; Tevita Kefu, Juan Diego; Taylor Salanoa, Manti; Sefesi Sitake, Hillcrest; Ron Tonga`onevai, Hunter; Asi Tu`akoi, East; Junior Tuha, Springville; Tauni Vakapuna- 5AMVP, Hunter

## SECOND TEAM:

**Volleyball:** Joh Teena Filipe, Skyline; Tipaleli Fotu, Pleasant Grove;

**Girls Basketball:** Joh Teena Filipe, Skyline; Shawnee Slade, Taylorville; Losa Tali, West; **Boys Basketball:** Brayden Bell, Brighton; Phil Poloa, Jordan; Adrian Sese Takai, Murray;

**Football:** Isley Filiaga, Timpanogos; Pa Latu, Alta; Max Moala, Olympus; Vili Ngata, Highland; Phil Poloa, Jordan; Samiu Tu`ifua, Judge; Sione Tupouniua, Hunter

## HONORABLE MENTION:

**Girls Basketball:** Pearlsha Alo, Granger; Cassandra Langi, Dugway; Ilima Sam Fong, Hurricane; Aarika Wolfgramm, Cyprus;

**Boys Basketball:**

Matt Asiata, Hunter; **Football:** Eric Haukinima, East; Jordan Ika, Alta; Kilie Kalama, Northridge; Sefo Mailau, East; Marcus Ma`ilei, Highland; Leka Moeaki, Skyline; Rodney Mulitalo, Hunter; Mike Su`a, Copper Hills

## HAU AWARDS JUNIOR HIGH

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Sepi Ika**

**Andrew Kao**

**Marina Leuluai**

**Tatupu Semeatu**

**Wesley Sorensen**

**Donald Tialavea**

**Chelsea Tipa**

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Lance Afoa**

**Aana Barabas**

**Kenneth Cline**

**Kiana Davis**

**Kehaulani Folau**

**Jacqueline Jaeger**

**Aryanne Mailo**

**Lisa Mapa**

**Harold Moleni**

**Alyssa Peneueta**

**Josephine Tanuvasa**

**Jarett Tauiliili**

**Julianne Tialavea**

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Elysee Faalafua**

**Malia Iosefa**

**Rose Latu**

# 2004 Record Number Pacific Islander All State Athletes

The 2003-2004 school year has ended up as the most successful year so far for Pacific Islander athletes in high school. **Ray Feinga** of Hunter High School was named as *Mr. Football*; **Tai Wesley** of Provo High School was named as *Mr. Basketball*; **Tauni Vakapuna** of Hunter High School was named as *5A MVP in Football*, and **Tony Finau** of West High School became the *first Pacific Islander All Stater in Golf*.

For the past seven years, the Pacific Islander All State Banquet, sponsored by the Governor's Initiative on Families Today, has been held during the last weekend of March. This year, we scheduled it on the first week of April to allow the basketball All State athletes, and that made a difference. In the past years, we have averaged 2 basketball players (both boys and girls) selected to All State but this year there were 15. This year the All State Banquet was held on April 9<sup>th</sup> at the Embassy Suites Hotel. A total of 48 athlete's were recognized!

Over two hundred athletes, parents, coaches and community leaders attended the banquet. Melanie Reese, the Executive Director of the Governor's Initiative on Families Today and the Women's Commission, represented the Governor's Office. Gordon Walker, the Director of the Division of Housing and Community Development represented DCED and his wife, Senator Walker, also attended. Joyce Ah You, the Chairperson of the Pacific Islander Advisory Council opened the banquet by welcoming everyone. The keynote speaker this year was the University of Utah Liberty Bowl winning coach, Urban Meyer. He related very well to both All State athletes and parents in how to pursue a successful athletic career in college and how the University of Utah made it last year to the bowl. As the coaches presented their winning athletes, and as they came up out from the audience along with their parents, one could really feel that bonding relationship between the athletes and the coaches.

## Highest Number of HAU in Junior Highs

The Award Conference for our Gift Pacific Islander Young Achievers held at Eisenhower Junior High School on May 8<sup>th</sup> was the most successful and best organized gathering we have done in the eight years of this program. Over 700 students, educators, parents, church and community leaders came together to recognize and honor 187 Pacific Islander students in the middle and junior high schools throughout Utah who have done well in school.

The HAU academic award is presented to students who have managed to maintain a 4.0 grade point average during the school year. The total of 25 this year is the highest number we have honored in the eight years this Young Achievers program has been running (1998 - 7, 1999 - 10, 2000 - 13, 2001 - 17, 2002 - 18, 2003 - 21).

The new Chairperson, Joyce, and Vice-Chair, Mitzie, of the Pacific Islander Advisory Council rallied the members of the council and they came together with donations and sponsors that gave this year's conference a lot more impetus. There were tables in the cafeteria that were filled with information and resources to help families, and there was a lot of food for everyone at the end of the conference.

Melanie Reese presented the awards to the students, and the Council presented her with a special gift in recognition of the support she has given Pacific Islanders in the years she has been the executive director of the Governors Initiative on Families Today. The new executive director, Carol Walker, also participated.

**PACIFIC ISLANDER  
FAMILIES  
OF THE YEAR**

**Filikisi & Patiola  
Hafoka**  
*Glendale*

**David & Mereani Ige**  
*Orem*

**Fisi & Liahona  
Moleni**  
*West Valley City*

**Don & Tami Tialavea**  
*West Jordan*

**Solitu & Suvinia  
Purcell**  
*Provo*

**PACIFIC ISLANDER  
TEACHER  
OF THE YEAR**

**Sione Talia`uli Ika**  
*Highland High School*

**6-YEAR  
YOUNG ACHIEVERS  
CLASS OF 2004**

*Rose Barabas  
Daryl Brown  
Amy Burgess  
Lachelle Fiefia  
Tipaleli Fotu  
`Inoke Hafoka  
`Asinate Hala`ufia  
Jasmine Harward  
Tyson Hinde  
Nicolle Ige  
Norma-Jean Leota  
Aubrey Lallas  
Finita Maka  
Caroline Marshall  
Suliana Miller  
Vika Moli  
Stephanie Pikula  
Mosira Pilivi  
Tiafau Purcell  
Nimolina Robertson  
Kerissa Tafiti  
Alisia Tali  
Vitoria Tanuvasa  
Leslie Tavo  
Lavinia `Ulu`ave*

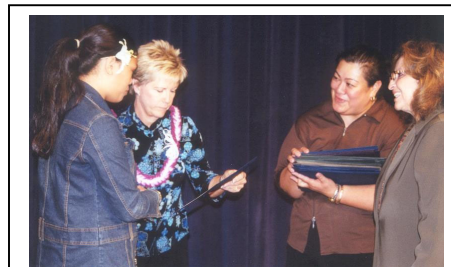
The keynote speaker for the conference was Mitzie Folau, the Council's Vice-Chair, who works as an attorney in one of the major law firms in Salt Lake. With the eloquence of a lawyer, Mitzie encouraged students and parents by sharing the challenging path she had pursued to become an attorney.

Real early on in the school year, the principal of Bennion Junior High School called to request if their Polynesian Club could provide the entertainment for the conference. The students definitely did a great job and their performance was a great cultural addition to the program.

There were 182 students in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades that were nominated from the schools for academic recognitions (7<sup>th</sup> – 72; 8<sup>th</sup> – 75; 9<sup>th</sup> – 35). Of these students, 103 were presented with the ALII awards, and 74 with the TAMALII.



2004 GIFT Families of the Year  
Hafokas, Purcells, & the Iges



Mary Bangerter, Mitzie Folau & Joyce Valdez  
awarding a Pacific Islander Young Achiever

## **25 Senior's as 6 Year Young Achievers**

This is the seventh year that we have held the Senior Young Achievers conference at the West High School auditorium, but this year's was just simply awesome! A lot of this had to do with the most professional entertainment that was provided by the West High School Polynesian Club. This performing group of students had danced in their annual luau on the previous evening, and their performance at the conference was polished and their costumes were just spectacular. Their Samoan, Tahitian, Maori and Tongan numbers were performed in between the speakers and the presentation of the awards. Over 500 Pacific Islanders attended this annual celebration.

A total of 155 Pacific Islander students were nominated from the schools throughout Utah for academic recognitions, having maintained a cumulative grade point average of no less than 3.50 for the current school year. Of these, there were 12 students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade; 57 in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 35 in the 11<sup>th</sup>, and 55 in the senior classes. Of these, 89 were presented the ALII (3.50-3.79) awards, 63 the TAMALII (3.80-3.99), and 7 with the HAU (4.00) awards.

We had the largest number of senior students (55) receiving academic awards this year. Of this Class of 2004, 25 of them that had participated and received academic recognition in the Young Achievers Program for the whole 6 years, and so they were given special recognition for this accomplishment.

The seven recipients of the HAU academic awards were: 10<sup>th</sup> Grade – *Jacob Abraham* and *Rebekah Bryant*; 11<sup>th</sup> Grade – *Jennifer Fiso*; 12<sup>th</sup> Grade – *Henele Fungalei*, *Norma-Jean Leota*, *Finita Maka*, and *Donald Jay Tuminez*. Of the seven students that were presented the I Mua Leadership Awards, *`Inoke Hafoka* was student body president of East High School and *Norma Jean Leota* was president of West High School. *`Inoke* was the first Polynesian ever to be president at East High. *Stephanie Pikula* and *Mosira Crista Pilivi* were Sterling Scholars.



## My Polynesian Heritage By Helen Folau

I am proud of my Polynesian heritage, Every time my family congregates together. I come from a Samoan and Tongan marriage, It strengthens my love for all people forever.

I have strains of Niuean, Japanese and English, Which add a flavorful mixture to my culture. Although in the South Pacific we were established, It is now in Utah that I am nurtured.

With traditions infused with legends, dance and song, I have learned of where my family originates.

The legacy and grand birthright for which I long, Grows in my lowly meek heart where it motivates.

With edenic paradise and ageless beauty, The soft tropical winds blow gently overhead. I am constantly reminded of my duty, To God, family and those who have gone on ahead.

The spiritual sturdiness of my whole family, With overflowing hearts, loud laughter and broad smiles, Their love and affection for others one can see, As they share their wealth across the outstretched miles.

One day I will return to my emerald home, Way out across and over the hearty blue seas. Because just like the turbulent white ocean foam, I too must return to the land that calls to me.



Joyce Ah You, Chair  
Pacific Islander  
Advisory Council

Juanita Bennioni was the keynote speaker for the conference. The distinguished guests at the conference included Mary Bangerter from the Governor's Office, Carol Walker the Executive Director of the GIFT and the Women's Commission, and Joyce Valdez from the Women's Commission and Governor's Literacy Board.



Byron Folau, 2004 Senior Tamali'i Recipient



Mosira Pilivi, 2004 Senior Sterling Scholar

## Southern Utah Joins Young Achievers

In the extreme south of Utah lies the most southern city of St. George surrounded by its towering red mountains. Here also is a fast growing community of Pacific islanders. The Southern Utah Polynesian Association (SUPA) has held together this small group for many years. Because it takes about six hours to drive down there, the Young Achievers Program hosts a separate get together in St George. Even though it is so much smaller but it is still so very much necessary.

For the second year in a row, the award meeting was held at the Desert Hills Immediate School. Carol Walker of GIFT made it down, and joined Bill Afeaki at the ceremony. Herb Basso, the president of SUPA, welcomed the group of 53 students, parents and community leaders who were in attendance.

Bill Afeaki gave a report on the award conferences in Salt Lake and also as to how Pacific Islander students are doing in the public schools in Utah. He told the parents and students about the Governor's summer reading program and encouraged them to read for twenty minutes everyday during the summer. Carol Walker reminded everyone of the Governor's Literacy calendar and package that are being distributed through the schools and urged parents to ensure that their children read and win the prizes.

A total of 23 students were nominated from the schools for academic awards, 12 from middle schools and 11 from high schools. There were three HAU awards: 8<sup>th</sup> - *Kalehua Harward and Isaac Puriri*; and *Anthony Christensen*, a senior. *Ilima Sam Fong* of Hurricane High School was also recognized for making All State in Volleyball for the second year in a row.

SUPA also recognized 40 students for their achievements in sports and a variety of other school related activities. Many of these students were part of those that were receiving the academic awards.

## We Will Make A Difference!!

When the Council retreat came around this year, the members were looking forward to the task of electing a new chair. Four new members joined the council at the retreat, but one of them was not quite ready for the surprise that she was going to get.

**Joyce Ah You**, the newly appointed Samoan representative to the Council was elected as the new Chairperson and **Mitzie Folau**, another one of the four



Mitzie Folau, Vice Chair  
Pacific Islander  
Advisory Council



Pania Heimuli  
Hawaiian Representative



Julian Kau  
Hawaiian Representative



Folafolaga Avei  
Samoan Representative

Samoan representatives, was elected as the Vice-Chair. Since their election, this duo has really been moving things along in a big way.

In as much as the executive order lays out the functions of the council, Joyce and Mitzie were desirous to put together a mission statement that would clearly spell out the work of the council. After exploring various options, they concluded with the following:

"The Pacific Islander Advisory Council's mission is to empower all Pacific Islanders in Utah by facilitating and disseminating information to improve and strengthen their educational, cultural, economic, health, and legal quality of life and to aid a stronger unified community."

Their coming was very timely because the office was just gearing up for its busiest time of the year with its many GIFT Conferences. The All State Banquet and the two Young Achievers award conferences in Salt Lake have been the biggest and the most successful in the eight years they have been running.

The duo rallied the council members together and they were out soliciting sponsors and contributions for the conferences. There were displays of resources and information for the Pacific Islander families and there was a lot of food for everyone.

Both Joyce and Mitzie have been interviewing the council members to get more commitment from them in being more proactive out there in the communities they each represent. We are already feeling the momentum of their leadership and they are already making a difference in the council. This will undoubtedly have a ripple effect on the Pacific Islander community at large.

## New Council Members

The Utah State Office of Pacific Islander Affairs and the Pacific Islander Advisory Council would like to welcome Pania Heimuli, Julian Kau, and Folafolaga Avei. Pania, Julian, and Folafolaga were recently appointed by Governor Olene Walker to the Pacific Islander Advisory Council.

Pania, Julian, and Folafolaga all bring a diverse background that will benefit both the Pacific Islander Advisory Council as well as the Pacific Islander Community!

Pania Heimuli is many things to many people but, above all, she is a wife and mom. She and her husband, Lakei, have four children: Hema (17), Helam (12), Hevynn (10), and Houston (7). Born to Thomas and Norma Murray in Kahuku, Hawaii, Pania is of Maori-Hawaiian-Japanese descent. Pania is employed as Diversity Professional for the Postal Service and has worked for U.S.P.S. since 1994. She serves on the United States Postal Service National AAPI Steering Committee, is a member of the Business Advisory Council for Easter Seals of Utah, and recently ended a term on the Board of Directors for the Salt Lake Chapter of the Society for Human Resources Management. Her hobbies include sitting in the audience or in the stands cheering for her children (she's their #1 fan!), working with young women in church, visiting her parents in San Diego, and exemplifying the Aloha spirit in everything she does.

For more than 30 years, Julian Kau has held senior management roles on a wide range of multi-facility projects throughout the United States and in several foreign countries. Projects under his direct supervision and management covered a broad spectrum of infrastructure and facility design, engineering and construction assignments. In addition to his management roles, Julian was an active member of the U.S. Navy for 27 years serving throughout the mainland and Hawaii. Julian and his wife, the former Momilani Soong of Kapaa, Kauai, have three grown children and eight grandchildren. Julian and Momilani have kept up with their Hawaiian culture by participation in cultural and civic activities of Hawaiian organizations throughout the mainland. They have been

**SOLE SPONSOR  
2004  
YOUNG ACHIEVERS  
SCHOLARSHIPS**

**The Church of Jesus  
Christ of Latter Day  
Saints Foundation**

**2004  
SUMMER FESTIVALS  
& EVENTS**

**July 18 – July 24  
Samoa Heritage  
Week**

Kearns Park  
5051 S. 4015 W.  
Contact: Jacob  
Fitisemanu, 265-7564  
Festival Coordinator

**July 29 – July 31  
Tongan Royal Visit**

**August 4<sup>th</sup>  
Know Your Legal  
Rights**

Sorenson Multicultural Cntr.  
855 W. California Avenue  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
Contact: Sanobi Johnson  
801-538-8612

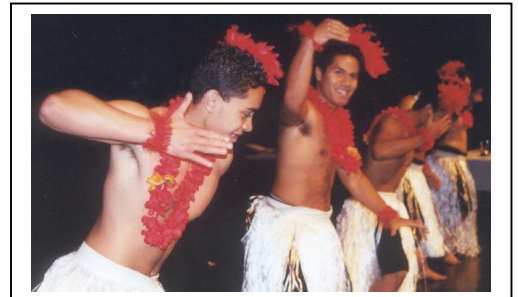
**August 21<sup>st</sup>  
Friendly Island  
Tongan Festival**

Sherwood Park  
400 S. 1500 W.  
Salt Lake City  
Contact: Ivoni Nash  
INASH@usoe.k12.ut.us

active in Hawaiian Civic Club activities where Julian served as Treasurer of Hui Hawaii O Utah for three years. They love Hawaiian music. Julian plays the guitar, ukulele, and bass and Momilani dances hula and loves to sing Hawaiian songs.

Folafolaga Avei has also lived a very full life. Born in Nofoalii, Samoa, Folafolaga attended the Church College of Western Samoa. From there, he migrated to Hawaii where he attended BYU-Hawaii, then known as the Church College of Hawaii. Folafolaga has lived many places including Samoa, Hawaii, California, Texas and now Utah. Last year, Folafolaga retired from the American Airlines where he worked as a supervisor for 30 plus years. In 1998, Folafolaga Avei was called as Bishop for the Vaiola Samoan Ward where he currently still serves. But most important of all, Folafolaga is a husband, father, and grandfather. He has been married to Nancy Avei for over 40 years. They are the parents of 7 children and grandparents to many more grandchildren. In his spare time, Folafolaga is known to be quite a handyman around the house, fixing anything that needs to be.

If you would like more information on the Pacific Islander Advisory Council, please visit our website at [www.utah.org](http://www.utah.org).



West High School Polynesian Club performing during the 2004 Senior High GIFT Conference

## **Planning Ahead – Utah High School Diploma**

In the last few years, there has been a lot of dialogue within the Utah Legislature but also throughout the schools and the community about getting schools to be more accountable. This resulted in the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS), the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), SB 154 and SB 185, and Performance Plus.

In the future then, for students in Utah to get the Basic High School Diploma, they will still be required to *earn the required credits*. In addition, they will be *required to pass all three sections of the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (U-BSCT)*. They will also be required to *complete certain exit competencies* such as effective oral communication; problem solving using reasoning; accessing, analyzing and applying information; and using evidence to formulate and support conclusions. The latter is still at a proposal stage. English Learners earn a Basic High School Diploma by attending the Utah public education system for 4 years or less meeting the course requirements through instruction based on the English Proficiency Standards, demonstration of competencies, and passing all sections of the U-BSCT.

An Alternative Completion Diploma will require the *completion of two of the three* requirements for the Basic High School Diploma. Students earn this by



## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2004 GIFT SPONSORS

Church of Jesus Christ of  
Latter Day Saints Foundation

Fotu Soliai, Asian  
Association of Utah

Smart, Schofield, Shorter &  
Lunceford

David Kahananui, Einstein  
Bagels

The Queen Center

Utah Valley State College

Shasta Northwest Inc.

Costco

Utah Symphony

Sams Club

Krispy Kreme Donuts

Families First Pediatrics

Wal Mart

Smiths

Vernetta Cline

Jodie Gray

Lori Hanna

meeting the required units, attempting the U-BSCT 3 times, and demonstration of exit competencies.

A Certificate of Completion, on the other hand, will provide *evidence of a student having attended school* but will not signify proficiency or competency.

The Utah Basic Skills Competency Tests (U-BSCT) is required under House Bill 3 of 1999. These competency tests are on Reading, Writing and Math. It is first administered in the Spring of 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, and there are also Fall and Spring administrations after the 10<sup>th</sup>. Students must pass all three sections to earn a Basic High School Diploma. Students have five chances to take and pass each section (October and March of Junior and Senior Years). The results of these tests are returned with scale scores ranging from 101-199. Scores of 160 or higher are considered passing/proficient. Once a student passes a section, there is no need to retake it. It is going to be the graduating class of 2006 that will first be affected.



Bill Afeaki addressing Pacific Islander students during his public school speaking circuit

## Life Line for Pls in Public Schools

In his continuing effort to reach Pacific Islander students in the public schools, Bill Afeaki decided at the end of the last school year that he would try to visit as many schools as possible and speak to the students. With the growing number of students dropping out of the schools, coupled with the continuing decrease of students graduating, he wanted to develop among students a greater sense of pride in who they are and ensure them that they are very capable of excelling in education.

Bill took the time to develop a forty-five (45) minute power point presentation. He covered the origin of Polynesians, Melanesians and Micronesians, and emphasized to students who they are. The first part of the presentation deals with identity and the fact that Pacific Islanders have always been on the move across the vast Pacific Ocean, and yet wherever they settled they were successful. He then articulates the foundational values that hold the cultures of the Pacific, those of respect, compassion, endurance and diligence.

Education is nothing new to Pacific Islanders, though for hundreds of years it was informal. Education is the equalizer and success in education ultimately opens the doors to all the opportunities available in this great country. Bill laid on the kids the unacceptable level that Pacific Islander students are, according to available data, in education. He challenged all the students to turn their performance around, and if they need help to catch up. There are certainly a lot of resources available to them!

Almost all the schools were happy to take advantage of the request to speak to the Pacific Islander students. In the three larger school districts in Salt Lake County (Salt Lake City, Granite and Jordan), Bill visited 20 middle and junior high schools and also spoke to 12 of the high schools. A handful of

## **UTAH DONOR REGISTRY**

**Say "YES" Utah!  
Donation, It's All About  
Life!**

**Organ, Eye, and Tissue  
Donation Facts:**

People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves potential donors. Medical advances after change the guidelines as to who can be a donor.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONATED?**

- ❖ Heart, Kidney, Lungs, Pancreas, Liver, Intestines, Corneas, Skin, Tendons, Bone, Heart Valves, Blood, and Bone Marrow
- ❖ Many Pacific Islanders have already benefited from donor registry & donations, however, DONOR REGISTRY is still low among Pacific Islanders

**Please start saving lives today by saying "YES" to ORGAN, EYE, and TISSUE donation!**

Right now you can donate blood, bone marrow, or even a kidney. Without blood donors, most transplants would not be possible. You are never too old to be a hero!!

**CALL: 1-866-YES-UTAH**  
[www.yesutah.org](http://www.yesutah.org)

**UTAH DONOR REGISTRY**  
230 S. 500 E., SUITE 290  
SLC, UT 84102

schools felt that separating Pacific Islander students from the rest of the student body represented a form of segregation and so they refused the request for the Director to come and speak at their school.

All in all, many of the administrators from both the school districts and the 32 schools who attended the presentation had nothing but praise about the way the presentation was put together. They strongly felt that the message was on target and that such a presentation should continue in the future.

## **Tongan Inmates Climb In Number & Violence**

In three different visits, some of the Pacific Islander community and church leaders and the director visited a total of 92 Pacific Islander inmates at the Utah Correctional Facilities in Draper as well as the Central Utah Correctional Facilities in Gunnison. 58% of these inmates are Tongan compared to 19% who are Samoan, and the remaining 23% were made up of Hawaiians, Micronesians and other Pacific Islanders. This represents a disproportionate representation compared to the population where Tongans are 40% of Pacific Islanders in Utah and Samoans are 30%.

This is the seventh year that the Office of Pacific Islander Affairs has kept up its visits to the Utah Correctional Facilities, which is about a two hours drive from Salt Lake City. The director and the whole Pacific Islander community want to acknowledge and thank the administrators of the Department of Corrections and the wardens in both sites for accommodating these special visits. The director also wants to express his gratitude and the community's appreciation to the two Polynesian Ethnic Minority Resource Officers working in Corrections, Joe Finefeuiaki and Lise Higgs Tafuna, for facilitating these visits.

The director paid a separate visit to the 44 inmates at the Uintah and Ouray maximum-security units and visited with them two at a time. Joe and Lise accompanied him and it took the whole day eventually leaving Draper at 8:00 p.m. in the evening. These 44 inmates represent 48% of all the Pacific Islander inmates in adult corrections. Inmates who are in these maximum-security units are there because they are supposed "security threats". This often means that they were convicted of violent crimes, have problems with violence and gang affiliations, or they are repeat offenders of prison regulations. Of these 44 inmates in maximum-security, 73% of them were Tongans and 19% were Samoans.



Pacific Islander community leaders during the annual Utah Correctional Facility visits



Lise Higgs Tafuna, Warden Lee Liston, & Joe Finefeuiaki



# Community Action in Pictures

## I Am Proud Of My Pacific Islander Heritage

By Suliana Miller

"I am Proud of my Pacific Islander Heritage..."  
Because I come from a long line of a well respected family, we sing, we dance, we eat, we attend church that is what they taught me.

My grandparents had been dedicated to bringing their kids to a better place. They had been through many ups and downs to bring our strong culture from Tonga here to America with so much grace.

"I am Proud of my Pacific Islander Heritage..."  
Because we come from a culture where we are looked upon by outsiders as minorities. As long as I can remember the people of my heritage has brought along with them the respect that individuals deserve from their countries.

In the media they have people believe that we are tough, rude, have no respect and are in gangs. Yet, since the beginning of time we dance to motivate, sing to cultivate and achieve to appreciate, we are not the one who gang bangs.

"I am Proud of My Pacific Islander Heritage..."  
Because I am who I am and will always stand tall to being Tongan, we each have our heritage and this is mine, Tonga is where it all began!

"I am Proud of my Pacific Islander Heritage!"



Pacific Islander  
Advisory Council  
Christmas



Councilman Sitake with family following  
swearing-in to South Salt Lake City  
Council



First Tongan United Methodist Choir at Mayor  
Rocky Anderson's Swearing in for 2nd Term  
as Salt Lake Mayor



First Pacific Islander Coalition  
Meeting



Pacific Islander Democratic Caucus  
leaders following Press Release at Capitol



Hawaiian Community Leaders  
meeting at Columbus Center



Samoan Community Leaders meeting  
at West Coast Hotel



Tongan Community Leaders  
meeting at Embassy Suites Hotel

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## **SLCSD Concerns About Test Scores**

The Salt Lake School District recently released the scores from the Utah State Office of Education for the district's Utah Basic Skills Competency Tests (UBSCT). These were the tests on Reading, Writing and Math that 10<sup>th</sup> graders were administered last spring. The results are returned as scale scores ranging from 101 to 199 where scores of 160 or higher are considered as passing/proficient.

A total of 91 Pacific Islander students took the **Math** test. Of these 45.1% passed while 54.9% were not proficient. In the other ethnic groups, those that passed in Math – African Americans 35.7%, Native Americans 33.3%, and Hispanics were at 30.4%. The percentile of those that were proficient in Math among Asian students was at 69.9% with Caucasian/White students 73.1% were proficient.

In the **Reading** portion, 94 Pacific Islander students took the test. 68.1% (64) were proficient while 31.9% (30) failed. In comparison, percentage of proficiency in reading were 80.7% among Asians, 77.3% among Native Americans, 62.0% among African Americans and Africans, and 61.4% among Hispanics. Caucasians and White students were at 91.6%.

93 Pacific Islanders took the **Writing** test and 65.6% (61) were proficient and 34.4% (32) failed. 80.7% of the Asians, 56.7% of African Americans, 51.5% of Hispanics, and 47.6% of Native American were proficient in writing. 83.1% of Caucasian students were proficient.